

Last winter, I went to visit some friends in Phoenix, AZ, and couldn't decide how to make the best use of my limited time. One day, since my buddy has to be home by 3PM in order to greet his kids before their return from school, we had to pack a lot into a short day, especially since we'd be spending most of our time in the car.



I found the National Park Service's Web site to be an invaluable resource in planning my trip. One of the gems I saw during my adventure thanks to the site was **Montezuma's Castle**. Carved into a towering limestone cliff is a 20 room high-rise apartment that provided shelter in an unforgiving desert landscape.

I was able to get current conditions, directions, and information regarding fees and a history of the site.

Unfortunately, in 1951, the National Park Service closed the Montezuma Castle cliff dwelling to the general public to prevent further damage to the structure. The NPS has a scale model replica to give visitors an idea of what life was like inside the cliff dwelling.



Thanks to modern technology, the NPS has been able to preserve this historic site while sharing its secrets with the world. Currently, a [virtual tour](#) is available from the NPS Web site. When I was visiting, the staff were in the midst of digitally recording each room in order to provide a first-person walkthrough of the site.

I added some pics from my trip to the [gallery](#) if folks want to check them out.

I plan on using the NPS site again for my upcoming trip to California!

On a related note, here is a public service announcement video that encourages the public to preserve our national parks. Let's do our part to preserve our country's national treasures for future generations to enjoy.

[video:<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6wUylaKOSal> 425x344]